

# Oxygen for Educators

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Positive Difference PD

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*Be the change...*

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## 1. Manage Your Stress Reactions: Get Ahead of Feeling Overwhelmed

**A: Your Stress Reactive Warning Signs**

**Whenever you notice yourself having one of your warning signs, take a few minutes and use your self-care skills.**

- ★ Place a star next to each warning sign you frequently experience.
- Circle your number one symptom from each column.

### PHYSICAL

Head or stomachaches  
Sleep problems  
Tight neck, shoulders  
Racing heart  
Fatigue  
Back pain  
Dizziness  
Grinding teeth  
Digestive issues  
Muscle tremors  
Biting nails/fingers

### EMOTIONAL

hopelessness  
nervousness/anxiety  
explosive  
edgy, irritability  
crying  
feeling overwhelmed  
constant worry  
unhappiness for no reason  
no sense of humor  
lack of interest

### BEHAVIORAL

Avoiding people  
Lashing out/swearing  
Lashing out/ hitting, violence  
Drug use  
Smoking  
Drinking  
Hyper-vigilant  
Critical of self/others  
Uncharacteristic behavior

### COGNITIVE

trouble thinking clearly  
forgetfulness  
trouble making choices  
poor concentration  
limited attention span  
reduced creativity  
drop in performance

## **STEP 1. USE THE CALMING BREATH TO QUIET YOUR BIOLOGY**

### **CALMING BREATHE SKILL—Do 15 rounds—90 seconds to reset!**

Less is more unless we are talking about the breath. More is better.

Try 5-15 minutes twice a day.

1. Feet on the floor. Back supported.
2. Eyes slightly open. Gaze at floor.
3. Breathe into your belly—4 COUNTS IN: 6 COUNTS OUT.
4. PALMS PRESS into thighs on IN BREATHE
5. PALMS RELEASE on OUT BREATH

## **STEP 2. IDENTIFY YOUR REACTION STYLE**

EXPLODER  
WORRIER  
AVOIDER  
SCARED STILL

## **STEP 3. DESCRIBE YOUR STRESSFUL SITUATION & THE REACTION THAT BOTHERS YOU THE MOST.**

## **STEP 4. Make a list of what you can do to help you manage better. (breathe, talk to a friend or person you trust, painting, walking...)**

## **STEP 5. MAKE A WRITTEN PLAN TO MANAGE THE STRESSFUL SITUATION.**

LIST THE SITUATION

WHAT YOU WILL DO:

BEFORE

DURING

AFTER

This page is adapted from *SPR: Skills for Psychological Recovery*,  
National Center for PTSD and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.)

## 75 WAYS TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE NEXT 5 MINUTES

1. TAKE A HOT SHOWER
2. CHANGE CLOTHES
3. TAKE A NAP
4. GIVE YOURSELF A MASSAGE
5. FIND YOUR PULSE
6. SUCK ON ICE CUBES
7. DRAW OR PAINT ON YOUR BODY
8. FLOSS
9. PAINT YOUR NAILS
10. GET A HAIRCUT
11. EXERCISE (WITHIN REASON)
12. PLAY WITH PLAY-DOH OR SOMETHING SQUISHY
13. LISTEN TO OR MAKE YOUR FAVORITE SONG PLAYLIST
14. CHANGE YOUR PROFILE PIC
15. WATCH A MOVIE
16. REWATCH YOUR FAVORITE TV SHOW
17. YOUTUBE FOR A WHILE
18. READ SOMETHING
19. TAKE QUIZZES ON [WWW.SPORCLE.COM](http://WWW.SPORCLE.COM)
20. EAT ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE FOODS
21. CHEW BUBBLE GUM AND MAKE THE BIGGEST BUBBLE YOU CAN
22. BAKE COOKIES
23. MAKE A NICE MEAL
24. HAVE SOME CHOCOLATE
25. GO FOR A WALK
26. GO OUTSIDE
27. CLOUDWATCH/STARGAZE
28. GO SWIMMING
29. GO TO THE MOVIES OR A PERFORMANCE
30. PLAN A DAY TRIP
31. GET A HUG FROM A FRIEND
32. SPEND TIME WITH A PET
33. SEE SOMEONE YOU LOVE
34. CALL UP YOUR FAMILY
35. INVITE FRIENDS OVER
36. TELL A BAD JOKE
37. VISIT YOUR NEIGHBORS
38. MAKE A LIST OF YOUR BEST QUALITIES
39. LIST THINGS THAT YOU'RE PROUD OF
40. NAME EACH OF YOUR TOES
41. LEARN TO JUGGLE
42. DRAW, PAINT, OR MAKE SOME FORM OF VISUAL ART
43. START YOUR MEMOIR OR A BLOG
44. WRITE A POEM OR MAKE UP A FANTASTIC STORY

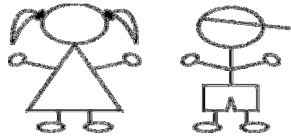
45. START A BUCKET LIST
46. START A DREAM JOURNAL
47. TAKE PICTURES
48. WRITE A LETTER TO SOMEONE YOU MISS
49. VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME
50. DO RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
51. MAKE A PRESENT FOR A FRIEND
52. LEARN A NEW SKILL
53. LEARN 10 NEW WORDS
54. PLANT SOMETHING
55. PLAY A VIDEO GAME
56. PLAY AN INSTRUMENT
57. DO A PUZZLE
58. MEDITATE/DO YOGA
59. LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE
60. SEND YOURSELF FLOWERS
61. CLEAN
62. REORGANIZE
63. DO LAUNDRY
64. REARRANGE YOUR FURNITURE
65. TALK TO AN INANIMATE OBJECT (like a teddy bear)
66. SEE HOW QUIET YOU CAN BE
67. SEE HOW LOUD YOU CAN BE
68. WRITE A LETTER TO YOURSELF TO BE OPENED IN 20 YEARS
69. CREATE A NEW DANCE MOVE
70. COUNT FLOOR TILES
71. SAY THE NAME OF EVERY OBJECT YOU SEE
72. DIG IN THE DIRT
73. WRITE ON THE SAND
74. LOOK FOR IMAGES IN THE CLOUDS
75. YOUR IDEA HERE\_\_\_\_\_

### **A SELF-CARE STRATEGY THAT NEVER FAILS:**

When you're down, write down a list of things you are grateful for. Consider setting cell your phone alarm for multiple reminders throughout the day. Gratitude doesn't change circumstances. It does change how we cope.

## 2. Is that a HELPFUL Thought?

Changing what we tell ourselves.



### Do you ever think or say:

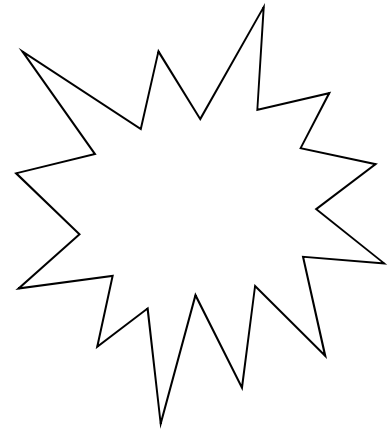
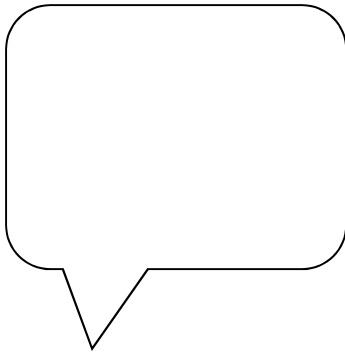
*Things will never get better.*

*I should be coping better.*

*I should have done more.*

*It's unfair.*

*I can't trust anyone.*



### Unhelpful thoughts—we all have them.

These are the types of thoughts we may have when we are under stress.

We may fill our minds with these thoughts that make us feel sad, hopeless, fearful, worried, guilty, angry, frustrated.

Can you imagine saying “Things will never get better” to a young child? We would not do that. So why do we say or think these things to ourselves?

## **4 Key Ideas You Need to Know about Unhelpful Thoughts:**

1. Unhelpful thoughts become our “go to” thoughts whenever we are overwhelmed or distressed. These thoughts lead us to feel helpless and out of control, unsafe, guilty, unable to cope, and angry or full of blame.
2. Unhelpful Thoughts: You may be right. Maybe there is nothing you can do. And you may be wrong. Right. Wrong. It doesn't matter.

### **HOW DOES THE THOUGHT MAKE YOU FEEL? DOES THE THOUGHT HELP YOU OR IMMOBILIZE YOU?**

3. The more time you spend replacing unhelpful thoughts with helpful thoughts, the more energy you will have to get moving and recover from the problem or stressor.

(Adapted from Skills for Psychological Recovery Field Operations Manual, SAMHSA)

### **HELPFUL THINKING**



***IS THAT A HELPFUL THOUGHT? JES SAYIN'***



**CATCH YOUR UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS.**

**REPLACE THEM IMMEDIATELY.**



**HAVE A FRIEND CATCH YOU, TOO!**

### 3. Building Healthy Social Connections

≈≈≈ For Support, Fun, Comfort ≈≈≈

*Because we were not meant to go it alone through life...*

**Who are your “go to” people or resources when:**

- You feel isolated or disconnected?
- You want to share your experiences of feelings?
- Help you feel that you fit in and belong?
- Give you good advice?
- You need practical help?

1. Develop your social “solar system.” Put yourself in the center. What other people and resources are in your social solar system.

2A. Review your social “solar system.” We need different folks for different strokes.

a. Who are your most important connections right now?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Who are the folk you share your feelings or experiences with?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Who can you go to for advice or help with your problems?

\_\_\_\_\_

d. Who do you want to spend more time with socially in the next couple of weeks? \_\_\_\_\_

e. Who can help you with practical tasks?

\_\_\_\_\_

f. Who needs your help or support right now?

\_\_\_\_\_

2B. Review your map.

- Who or what is missing?
- Are there loved ones or friends with whom you are not currently connected, but want to be?
- People you want to spend more time with?
- People you want to spend less time with?
- Relationships that need improving?

- Ways to help others?
- Do you want to increase your social activities or give to others by joining a community group?

### 3. Make a social support plan.

- Select one or two areas in your map that you want to change in the next couple of days or weeks.
- Who? What? Where? When? How?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What will you do to connect?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Will you need any help to get the plan started? \_\_\_\_\_

#### *For each strategy use:*

1. What do I have? ID Resources & Strengths
2. What do I need or want to improve?
3. Who can help me?
4. What's my plan? (Did I write it down? Or is it in my head with all the other-- "I'll get to it! Don't have time! Oh, now I remember—I forgot to take time for me...)
5. How will I know if my plan is working?

#### *The Plan...*

- ✓ Start small. Break it down. Micro-size.
- ✓ Stay the course. Use pithy clichés, posters, post-its, alarm reminders to get back on track.
- ✓ Recognize & appreciate your progress.

#### ♥ *Do not go it alone! Build a Community of Care.*

- ✓ Form a social atom with people who want to support each other.
- ✓ Find ways to connect with them. (FB page. Weekly staff meetings. Instagram group. Snapchat...)
- ✓ Use the shared language of support and resilience.
- ✓ Have a self-care, positive coping, and strengthening resilience weekly "Let's do IT" challenge.

*Start copying what you love. Copy. Copy. Copy. Copy.*

*At the end of the copy you will find yourself.*

Yohji Yamamoto, fashion designer